

The introduction of William Shakespeare



William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was an English poet, playwright, and actor, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language. His epic works, including some collaborations, consist of about 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and a few other verses, of which the authorship of some is uncertain. His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright.

Shakespeare produced most of his famous works between 1589 and 1613. His early plays were mainly comedies and histories. He then wrote mainly tragedies until about 1608, including Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and Macbeth, considered the best works in the English language.

MACBETH

Ben Jonson once praised Shakespeare that

Triumph, my Britain, thou has one to show

To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.

He was not of an age, but for all time!

The historical background of Macbeth

Macbeth (1005-1057) was a noble of Moray in Scotland. His mother was born of the royal family, so Macbeth had the right of inheritance of the throne. In his period, his rank can be a duke. However, the development feudalism in Europe was not mature. There was not a title named duke at that time. In 1020, Macbeth’s father passed away in a war. Then, Macbeth took over the Moray region. In 1034, Malcolm II of Scotland died and his grandson Duncan became the king.

In later period of Duncan’s reign, Scotland often had fights against other regions nearby. In 1034, Duncan led his army to where Macbeth governed. Rumors said that the disagreement between Duncan and Macbeth had been made public. For some reasons, Duncan thought that there was a need to kill Macbeth. As a result, he attacked Moray. However, the death of Duncan was the ending of this war. Macbeth inherited the crown legally.

The reign of Macbeth lasted for 17 years. According to the historian of later generations, Macbeth was a kinder king compared with Duncan. Yet in 1052, Macbeth had a number of conflicts with England. And, he failed to defeat England, which provided an opportunity for the political dissident to revolt against him. In 1057, Malcolm III who is the son of Duncan killed Macbeth and took over Scotland.

The reason why the play Macbeth was a tragedy instead of a historical play was that there were too many differences between the plot and the historical fact, but most people influenced by Shakespeare would rather believe the plot.

MACBETH